



News Release

Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Block Island NWR □ John H. Chafee NWR at Pettaquamscutt Cove □ Ninigret NWR □ Sachuest Point NWR □ Trustom Pond NWR

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For Immediate Release

March 1, 2017

Controlled Burns at Ninigret and Trustom Pond National Wildlife Refuges to Benefit Wildlife Habitat and Visitors

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service will conduct controlled burns at Trustom Pond Refuge in South Kingstown, RI and at Ninigret Refuge in Charlestown, RI, in accordance with an approved Prescribed Fire Plan. The controlled burns will require three to five days, weather dependent, between March 8th and May 30, 2017, at which time the refuge will be partially closed for public safety.

Controlled burns will be performed by a fire management team of professionals trained and skilled in prescribed burning. The burns will adhere to the smoke management guidelines developed by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. The use of a controlled burn is part of the Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex (RINWRC) annual habitat management plan.

Controlled burning is an important tool for maintaining and restoring native plant communities and wildlife habitat, managing invasive species, and reducing wildfire danger. Many of the species of plants and animals found in Rhode Island's grasslands, shrublands, and pitch pine/oak forests are fire adapted and require periodic fires to thrive. When properly managed, these areas support a diversity of native birds, mammals, insects, and plant species. To observe birds and other wildlife, viewing scopes are available at several refuge observation platforms. Birding backpacks with binoculars and bird guides are also available to borrow at the Complex visitor centers.

Because controlled burning is weather-dependent, visitors are encouraged to call the office at 401.364.9124 during the burn period for any possible trail closures for the day. Visitors can also visit the Complex's Facebook page for trail closure information, keyword: Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitat for the continuing benefit of the American people.
